



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

BY GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR

Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest

The Game and Fish Department's Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest is ready for entries.

The contest encompasses all North Dakota wildlife in a variety of categories – nongame species, game species, insects and plants.

The winner in the nongame category – which includes only animals that are not hunted, fished or trapped – will appear on the Department's 2007 Watchable Wildlife program promotional poster.

The photographer submitting the poster winner, and all place winners in each category, receive prizes. Each of the prize-winning photographs will also appear in *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.

The image selected for the poster will be selected only from entries that are original, vertical-composition transparencies (slides) or a minimum 8.0 megapixel digital image. Prints, slides and digital photos are all acceptable formats for entries in each category.

Deadline for submitting photos for the annual Watchable Wildlife photo contest is September 30.

PHOTO CONTEST RULES:

Eligibility

The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers. North Dakota Game and Fish Department employees and their immediate family members are not eligible. Photographs must be taken in North Dakota.

How and where to enter

The contest is limited to 35mm slides or larger format transparencies, or 5x7-inch or larger color prints in either vertical or horizontal composition. Prints made from unaltered digital files are accepted. Photographers are limited to no more than five entries each. The overall winner must be in vertical format for use on the promotional poster.

The Game and Fish Department reserves the right to copy and print winners to promote the Watchable Wildlife program. By submitting an entry, photographers grant permission to Game and Fish to publish winning photographs in its magazine, *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, and also as part of the magazine on the Department's web page, gf.nd.gov. Appropriate credit will be given in any publication where such photos are used.

All entries should be sent to: Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest, North Dakota Game

and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095.

Nonwinning entries will be returned following contest judging.

Photo requirements

Slides, transparencies or prints must be accompanied by the photographer's name, address and phone number. Other information such as photo site location and month taken, equipment used, film speed and type, and lens/aperture settings would be useful.

Although care will be taken with submitted material, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department assumes no financial responsibility for lost or damaged materials.

Deadline

Entries will be accepted through September 30, 2006. Judging will take place in October, with winners notified by November 30. Receipt of entries will not be acknowledged.

Judging

Photos are judged on quality, composition, content and general appeal.

Please respect private lands by obtaining permission and be sure to use proper wildlife-watching ethics while photographing.

Sage Grouse Numbers Down

North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists have completed the 2006 sage grouse survey, and census data showed 196 males were counted on 17 active strutting grounds.

In 2005, biologists counted 225 males on 15 active grounds. The all-time high number of male sage grouse counted on leks was 542 birds in 1953, compared to a low of 111 in 1996.

Sage grouse are North Dakota's largest native upland game bird. They are found in extreme southwestern North Dakota, in Bowman and Slope counties.

Mule Deer Survey Complete

The badlands mule deer population index for western North Dakota remains higher than the long-term average, based on observations during the State Game and Fish Department's annual spring mule deer survey.

Biologists counted 2,567 mule deer in 24 study areas, covering 291 square miles. Mule deer density per square mile was 8.8, slightly less than 9.9 in 2005, but higher than the long-term average of 6.2 mule deer per square mile.

Biologists have surveyed the same 24 study areas from the air since the 1950s in order to obtain solid mule deer population data for the badlands. Each October, these same study areas are surveyed to monitor trends in demographics and production (buck-to-doe and fawn-to-doe ratios).

Good production in 2005, a conservative and responsible harvest strategy and recent mild winters are reasons for the continued above-average mule deer density in the badlands.



RON WILSON

Callahan Best of Show Runner-up

Kaylee Callahan from Valley City was a first-place winner and Best of Show runner-up in the 2006 North Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

Kaylee's name was inadvertently left off the list of winners published in the May issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*.



than 660 square miles were censused. Male grouse recorded per square mile increased from 4.7 in 2005 to 5.3 this year.

An indication of the fall season won't be known until mid-August, upon completion of brood surveys.



Pronghorn Application Deadline is August 9

Pronghorn applications will be available the middle of July, and the deadline for applying is August 9.

Prospective hunters are encouraged to apply on the Game and Fish Department's website at gf.nd.gov. The website also contains application forms that can be printed and mailed. Regular license fees apply and no service charge is added.

Applications will also be available at Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Applications are also accepted at the Department's toll-free licensing line, 800-406-6409. A service fee is added for license applications made over the phone.

Only North Dakota residents are eligible for pronghorn gun licenses.

Sharp-tailed Grouse Tallied

Preliminary reports from the 2006 spring sharp-tailed grouse census indicate an increase in the number of male grouse compared to last year.

Statewide, observers counted 3,525 sharptails on spring dancing grounds this year compared to 3,117 in 2005, a 13 percent increase. More

Swan Hunt Applications Out Soon

Applications for North Dakota's 2006 tundra swan licenses will be available the end of July and the deadline for submitting an application is August 16.

North Dakota residents and nonresidents are eligible to apply. Interested hunters can print out an application for mailing, or submit a lottery application online on the Game and Fish Department's website, gf.nd.gov. Regular license fees apply and no service charge is added.

Applications will also be available from Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors, or by calling 800-406-6409. A service fee is added for license applications made over the phone.

A total of 2,200 licenses are available. Successful applicants will be issued a tag to take one swan during the season. Since swans are classified as waterfowl, nonresidents may hunt them only during the period their nonresident waterfowl licenses are valid.

2005 Grouse and Partridge Seasons Summarized

North Dakota hunters last year harvested more sage grouse and Hungarian partridge, but fewer sharp-tailed grouse than in 2004.

The 2005 sharp-tailed grouse harvest was 109,032, down 2 percent from 111,641 in 2004. Number of hunters last year was 33,756 (24,433 residents and 9,323 nonresidents), up 4 percent from 32,609 in 2004. Kill per hunter decreased from 3.4 to 3.2.

Counties with the highest percentage of sharptails bagged by resident hunters include Mountrail, 7.6; Stutsman, 7.3; Burleigh, 5.4; and Ward and McHenry, 4.9. Top counties by nonresident hunters were Burleigh, 7.3; Sheridan, 5.8; Divide and McIntosh, 5.6; and Logan, 5.3.

Sage grouse hunters bagged 46 birds last year, up from 28 in 2004. Number of hunters decreased from 100 in 2004 to 87 last year. Kill per hunter increased from .28 to .53.

Last season's partridge harvest was 57,482, up 10 percent from 52,443 in 2004. Number of hunters was up 12 percent to 23,540 (17,492 residents and 6,048 nonresidents), compared to 21,066 in 2004. Seasonal kill per hunter decreased from 2.5 to 2.4.

Counties with highest percentage of partridge taken by resident hunters in 2005 include McLean, 8.2; Ward, 7.8; Stutsman, 5.7; Mountrail, 5.4; and Williams, 5.0. Top counties for nonresident hunters were Bowman, 10.3; Divide, 9.2; Hettinger, 6.8; McIntosh, 6.6; and Williams, 5.5.

Statistics are based on a survey of 4,215 resident and 1,517 nonresident hunters.

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS
ON Television

8 KUMV-TV WILLISTON KUMV - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMD - Monday - noon	10 KMOT-TV MINOT KMOT - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMC - Monday - noon	8 WDZ-TV GRAND FORKS WDZ - Wednesday - 5 pm
7 KQCD-TV DICKINSON KQCD - Tuesday - 9 pm (MT) KXMA - Sunday - 9 pm (MT)	5 KFYR-TV BISMARCK KFYR - Tuesday - 10 pm KXMB - Sunday - 10 pm CATV - Saturday - noon	FOX KVRN-TV FARGO KVRN - Sunday - 9 pm

INSTANT LICENSING

Online at gf.nd.gov or by phone
800-406-6409

Most types of Game and Fish licenses and applications are available both online at the Department's website, or over the phone. Online license purchases have no surcharge, while instant licensing over the phone carries a service charge of \$4 for transactions of \$70 or less, and \$10 if the cost is more than \$70.

Educator Workshop in August

Wild About Art – a workshop for teachers, environmental educators and others who instruct youth – will be offered August 8-9 at the Bismarck Art and Galleries Association.

Teachers completing this course will have a basis for teaching ecological concepts and environmental stewardship to students through visual arts using Project WILD materials.

Project WILD, a North Dakota Game and Fish Department educational program, is a multidisciplinary curriculum using environmental education as its vector. Each activity teaches concepts in math, science, social studies, language arts, physical education and art.

A pre-registration fee of \$25 is required by August 1. Graduate credit is available through the University of North Dakota for an additional \$50. For more information about the workshop contact Sherry Niesar, a Project WILD educator for more than 20 years and program director at Bismarck Art and Galleries Association, at 701-223-5986, or e-mail baga@btinet.net.



WARDEN STORIES

What Goes Around Comes Around

By Bill Schaller



Warden Bill Schaller

It was just another routine day of checking boaters and anglers on Lake Sakakawea a few years back, until I rounded a point near Mossett or Charging Eagle Bay on the beautiful Little Missouri arm of the big lake. There, I came upon a most unusual situation – a runaway boat, going around and around in small circles.

A safe distance away, several boats loaded with spectators had already gathered.

My first thought was to check the area to see if any one was bobbing in the water. When I didn't see anyone, I became concerned over the whereabouts of the occupant, until a young man in a nearby boat waved me over. When I got closer, the forlorn look on his face and his soaking wet clothes told me he had been the driver of the now-driverless boat.

After a short conversation, he hopped into my boat and explained what happened.

It seems he was cruising along at full throttle in his 14-foot open boat when he spilled his pop. As he reached to grab the can, he let go of the tiller handle on his 15-horsepower motor. The motor turned to the side and he was thrown out of the boat faster than you can say, "Oh darn."

Fortunately, he was thrown far enough away so that neither the boat nor the propellor hit him.

His luck continued as someone in a nearby boat saw what happened and rushed over to

retrieve him from the water, for he was not wearing a life jacket.

Of course, my first question for him when he finished his story was "How much gas do you have in the tank?"

Over the roar of the 15-horse I could barely hear him say, "I just filled it!"

Even at full throttle, a 15-horsepower motor will run a long time on six gallons of gas.

It wasn't long before most bystanders were either dizzy from watching the boat go around or had satisfied their curiosity and left. The young man thought that maybe he could jump into the boat as it went by.

When I dismissed that idea as being a bit too dangerous, he then suggested that if he could grab the motor as it came by, and straighten it out, the boat would run ashore. "Anything to get it stopped," he said.

Since all the other boats had left, I thought we might give it a try. I inched the bow of my boat closer to the runaway, but could not get close enough without risk of being hit. Then I remembered that one of my paddles had a hook on one end. The young man took the paddle and leaned over the bow as I moved closer to the circling boat. After many tries, he finally hooked the gas line and pulled it from the motor. In about a minute, our problems were over.

Back in his own boat and ready to leave, I reminded him to get the throttle control fixed as soon as he returned to the resort. "Don't worry, I will," was his reply as he motored away, waving with one hand, the other hand in a white-knuckle grip on the tiller handle.

BILL SCHALLER, a Jamestown native, is the Game and Fish Department district warden at Killdeer.

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